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## A PLAN FOR THE SUPERVISION OF INSTRUCTION BY PRINCIPALS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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The principals who are willing to devote a good deal of attention to supervision of instruction in their buildings may find the following plan practical. The plan is not offered because it possesses any superior merits or because it is original. It was devised after several years of rather aimless supervision and it has succeeded so well in practice with the author that it is offered to others.

The time required to supervise any subject as is outlined in this plan will depend upon the subject itself; whether it be a major or a minor subject, through how many grades it is taught, and upon the number of teachers teaching the subject.

The first part of the plan is that which deals with the visits by the principal. After choosing a subject for study the principal should reread at least three or four books on special methods in the subject to be studied. He should then plan his visits to include two visits to each teacher teaching the subject to be studied. To do this he needs a copy of each teacher's program at his desk. With the programs before him he should carefully schedule his visits keeping in mind his office duties, possible conflicts, and the avoidance of visiting the same teacher after too short an interval. As the chief purpose of this article is to present a technique a schedule actually used is inserted.

### A PLAN FOR THE SUPERVISION OF GEOGRAPHY DURING THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF FEBRUARY

The following schedule gave two visits to each teacher within a week of time. Except on Tuesday there were not more than

two visits on any one day. These visits were not all that were made by the principal but they were made with a particular purpose. Each visit included the study period, when the study was supervised by the teacher (if the teacher was not teaching another class during the study period). All notes were

SCHEDULE FOR FEB. 4 TO FEB. 8, INDICATING CLASSES IN  
GEOGRAPHY TO BE VISITED

Day	Time	Teacher
Mon.....	1:50- 2:15	A
	12:40- 1:05	F
Tues.....	9:00- 9:45	B
	12:30- 1:20	C
	1:50- 2:15	A
	2:15- 2:40	D
Wed.....	10:40-12:00	E
	12:40- 1:05	F
Thurs.....	9:00- 9:45	B
	12:30-12:55	D
	12:30- 1:20	C
Fri.....	1:50- 2:40	E

taken mentally. At the close of the visit, or as soon thereafter as was possible, a letter was written to the teacher stating the following:

1. Name of teacher, Grade, subject taught, lesson topic, time of recitation.
2. Lesson type: development, drill, review or study.
3. Work done by pupils during study period, if observed.
4. Recitation: oral or written, a brief review of actual order of procedure during the recitation.
5. Preparation on part of teacher as shown by materials at hand, written questions on blackboard, and in directions for study given to pupils.
6. Assignment.

7. Position of teacher: seated or standing, in front of, or to one side of class.
8. Suggestions with commendation. It is well in making suggestions to stress the strong points in the lesson.

The letters should be typewritten with enough carbon copies to give one to each teacher included in the study (teaching Geography). The time required to do the visiting and write the letters is usually about half of the school day. The letters were given to the teachers at the close of the day. While no individual teacher was notified in advance of the time she was to be visited all the teachers of this subject were told that it was being studied and that they would probably be visited at some time during the week. The plan of telling the teachers what subject is under careful supervision was used to get the teachers themselves to give the matter of lesson planning in that subject more careful attention than usual. The lessons more carefully planned give the teacher greater satisfaction in presentation and offer a higher grade of teaching to be judged by the principal. While the teachers were not told in advance just what points would be included in the letters they soon discovered them after reading the first few letters.

Again, in order to adhere to the purpose of this article, some of the letters written during the supervision of Geography are inserted. The author lays no claim to superior pedagogical wisdom and the letters may seem crude to many who read them. They were composed rapidly after visiting the teachers.

Tuesday, Feb. 5, 1918.

9:00-9:45—Miss. B., Low 5th Grade, Central Province of Texas. Development lesson. Books closed.

*Materials:* Map of Texas, questions written on board, drawing on board.

*Recitation:* Word study—"mesa," "erosion," "escarpment."  
Drawing on board to show escarpment. Questions on board answered twice.

*Suggestions:* It would have been good to have treated each new word as erosion was treated (by letting several children give examples). The drawing was simple enough to have been put on the board by a pupil. A good lesson showing careful preparation by the teacher.

Assignment brief. Teacher stood at front of room or near map. If the questions had been written on the front board they could have been read more easily.

12:30-1:20—Miss. C., High 5th Grade, New England States. Development lesson. Books open. Study period spent in outlining what was read. Outlines used during recitation.

*Recitation:* Review of industries, summary by teacher. Reading about commerce. Map study.

*Suggestions:* Plan of outlining by children during study period is good; might be improved by suggesting general form for outline. (See Charters' "Teaching the Common Branches," Chapter on Geography).

Your summary was a good one. Use of children's outlines was good.

Assignment brief. Teacher seated at desk.

1:50-2:15—Miss A., High 3rd Grade. Food, Clothing and Shelter. Review lesson. Books closed.

*Recitation:* Used questions at close of chapter. Some questions supplemented by teacher. Order of asking questions rotational.

*Suggestion:* Group the children as closely as possible to you during the recitation.

Assignment brief. Teacher seated at desk.

2:15-2:40—Miss. D., Low 4th Grade. Manufacturing Cities of New England. Development lesson. Books open.

Reading from text and discussing context. Question and answer. Brief map study.

Assignment brief. Teacher stood at front of room.

General comment: Too much reproductive and too little constructive imagination used. All lessons well taught. Since the Fifth and Fourth grades were studying the same topic some exchange of pupils might have added vitality to a part of each recitation.

Wed. Feb. 6, 1918. Supervision of Geography.

11:00—12:00 Miss E., Low 6th Grade. Cuba.

Entire period used for study. Children were filling in the details from a general outline given on the board. Teacher seated at desk. Pupils who completed the outline before the close of the period spent the remaining time in drawing a map of Cuba.

*Suggestions:* This is a very good method of directing study.

It might be better to use some of the time, even if only ten minutes, for oral work, or study as a group from the large map. This is suggested to relieve the necessity for so long sustained individual work by the children.

No assignment made.

12:40—1:05—Miss F., High 4th Grade. Teacher sat at desk and stood before the class.

*Materials:* Some rocks brought in from the playgrounds by pupils.

*Recitation:* Review questions over the day before's lesson.

Reading from the text with discussion.

Development lesson.

Specimens of rock shown to children by teacher.

Assignment brief.

*Suggestions:* The day is warm enough to have had the lesson in the school yard where each child might have had an opportunity to break a rock and examine it. The rocks that were brought to the class might have been passed around among the children to an advantage so that each child might have had an opportunity to examine one. I suggest that during the recitation the children be grouped nearer you. Your use of the laboratory method is good and do not be afraid to use it to the fullest extent.

Friday, Feb. 8, 1918.

9:00—9:45—Miss B., Low 5th Grade. Trans-Pecos Province of Texas.

*Materials:* Map of Texas, questions written on board as guides for study.

Ten questions. One question involved reasoning.

*Recitation:* Answers to questions, one question to each child.

Teacher drew map on board showing what is meant by "Lost Mountain".

Description of the province given by a child who had lived there.

Class pronounced difficult words in unison.

Assignment brief. Teacher stood in front of and to one side of room.

*Suggestions:* It is a splendid practice to use real experiences of children in your room (Janice). I suggest that when there is reading in unison either you act as leader or ask some child, a good reader with a strong voice, to lead.

12:30-1:20—Miss C., Test on New England States. Written lesson.

The above letters are copies of those sent to the teachers on the respective dates. They are offered merely as samples. Since they were written, and upon rewriting them at this time, I find that many improvements which I have put in later letters could have been put in them. The art of writing these letters is growing. The chief value of the letters may lie in the great body of material that they contribute, in time, at the rate of from two to four criticisms per day. This material when reviewed at the time of making the second or the third study of any subject is found to be equal in value to a chapter in a book on special method in the subject under consideration.

Brief conferences usually follow the letters. These are informal and usually consist of explanations by the teacher of why she did or did not do thus and so. By keeping in mind that the letters are for all and by making the suggestions practically free from very adverse criticism the author has kept his scalp and not only that, but has won the hearty approval of his teachers for the plan.

The second part of the plan deals with the visits by the teachers. Each teacher who was visited during the first week

by the principal was given an opportunity during the second week to visit one other teacher and was visited by one other teacher. The class visited should be as close to the grade taught by the visiting teacher as is possible unless some two grades are doing parallel work and the advanced teacher may get an insight into the first presentation of the subject matter.

The visiting teacher is requested to take careful note of what she observes and to make some kind of record of her visit for future reference if she should be called on to report at the final group meeting or if she finds something especially worthy of presentation at that time. The principal should call for reports frequently if there is suspicion about the carefulness of the observation or if there is doubt as to the teacher's ability to select points of importance. The teacher's report should contain all that the principal's letters contain except the suggestions.

THE VISITING SCHEDULE USED DURING THE SECOND WEEK  
OF THE STUDY OF GEOGRAPHY

Day	Time	Teachers	Principal
Mon.	9:00- 9:45	Miss C visit Miss B.	Teach Miss C's spelling.
	12:30-12:55	Miss A visit Miss D.	Teach Miss A's writing.
Tues.	1:50- 2:15	Miss D visit Miss A.	Teach Miss D's spelling.
	12:40- 1:05	Miss B visit Miss F.	Teach Miss B's history.
Wed.	12:30- 1:20	Miss E visit Miss C.	Teach Miss E's Low Sixth Geography.
	1:50- 2:40	Miss F visit Miss E.	Teach Miss F's language.

While the teacher is visiting, the principal should plan to teach in her room. To do this he should know the subject that he is to teach and the assignment at least a day in advance. The schedule for visits by teachers should be made known in advance, preferably on Friday of the week before they begin.



The plan to take over the classroom while the visiting teacher is out gives the principal an opportunity to check up on the work of the class. A few minutes review frequently brings to light omissions in instruction that may not be seen in many visits to a classroom. It is a splendid opportunity to check up on the type of teacher who always knows what to teach during a visit by the principal. By telling the children their teacher has gone visiting, any possibility of seeming to be checking up on the teacher is avoided. This plan also gives the principal an opportunity to know his children. As a part of the technique of the plan it is absolutely necessary for each teacher to have a seating plan on her desk. This seating plan will enable the principal to call on any child he desires to hear recite. Not the least valuable feature of the plan is the actual teaching done by the principal as an aid in keeping him constantly alive to classroom problems. By teaching (as is noted in the foregoing schedule) different subjects in different grades all phases of the problem of method are presented to the principal.

To successfully teach a class the lesson must be planned. The principal is no exception to this rule. To plan a lesson the principal must know in advance what has been taught the day or two before and the assignment for the day he is to take the class. I have found the following forms helpful. These forms are mimeographed and, after the schedules are arranged, it is but the work of a few minutes for the principal, or his office assistant, to fill in the blanks.

To the visiting teacher is handed the following slip several days before the time she is to visit.

Dear Miss .....

On ..... (date) ..... you will please visit Miss  
 ..... class in ..... (subject) ..... from ..... (time)  
 to ..... (time) ..... I shall teach your pupils while you are

visiting. Please hand me a copy of your lesson plan for the work I shall teach not later than .....(date)..... Please take enough notes (mentally) to enable you to write a report which may be called for at the group meeting next week. I shall be glad to confer with you about your visit at any time.

To the teacher who is to be visited is given the following slip several days before she is visited.

Dear Miss.....:

On .....(date)..... you will be visited by Miss ..... from .....(time)..... to .....(time).....

On the day the teacher is expecting her visitor there will be careful presentation of a lesson. The visitor sees almost the best teaching. The best teaching is done when the same careful preparation and presentation are used without the presence of a visitor. The presence of a visitor is sure to add an element of self-consciousness on the part of the average teacher and she does not do her best although as a result of the careful planning of this particular lesson the teaching may be better than usual.

The visiting teacher learns by observation. Before the close of the year she has had an opportunity to visit perhaps six or eight times. She has also read eight or ten lesson plans (the principal's letters) before each visit. She may have done some reading on special method. She has been visited the same number of times she has visited and at these times she has given more care to her lesson plans than usual. Unless she be unusual she should have gained something more than if she had done the customary routine instruction of her own room.

The third and last part of this plan for supervision is the group meeting of the teachers concerned. The aim of this meeting is to crystallize, in a few general suggestions, methods for improving instruction. At this meeting the teachers should

do most of the talking. The principal has spoken chiefly through his letters. If any definite suggestions take form at this meeting, record them, send a copy of them to each teacher and one to the office of the special supervisor or the superintendent.

Of course it is understood that in the office of the principal is filed at least one copy of each letter and of the general suggestions. At the beginning of the second and each succeeding year the records of the year before may be bound and placed in the Teachers' Library to be read by new teachers and to be reviewed by others. These records seem to me to be of great value. At the University of Texas mimeographed copies of many of these letters as a part of a course on Methods in the Intermediate Grades were used.

To close this article without giving an example of some of the general suggestions actually formulated at the group follow-up meetings would leave it incomplete. Referring again to the study of Geography, I find the following.

Feb. 18, 1918. General Suggestions regarding Instruction in Geography.

1. It would be good to correlate the work of the lower and upper grades by permitting pupils from the upper grades to go to the lower grades and tell what they know about the same subject the lower grades are studying. (To do this a system of exchanges has been worked out whereby teachers may plan when to send and when to receive these pupil visitors. The fact that the best pupils are permitted to go to other rooms has added an incentive to some pupils.)
2. Use more constructive and less reproductive imagination.
3. Use more of the special senses, especially including the sense of touch.
4. Correlate Geography with other subjects more, using music frequently.

5. Order a sand bin.
6. Hold the classes where they can derive the most from the recitation. (As a result of this suggestion many excursions to parks and industrial plants have been scheduled and some classes have recited on the roof and in the school yard.)
7. Always use the experience of the pupils when possible.